

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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12

ACTION NEA-10

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R 140410Z SEP 76
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3603

C O N F I D E N T I A L B A G H D A D 1 3 2 9

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IZ
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BAKR'S HEALTH

1. A BRITISH COLLEAGUE RECENTLY TOLD USINT OFFICER THAT PRESIDENT BAKR SUFFERED A STROKE ON AUGUST 27, 1976. HE ALSO SAID THAT, IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, A BRITISH NEUROLOGIST WAS BROUGHT TO BAGHDAD FOR CONSULTATIONS. ACCORDING TO A BRITISH NURSE, THROUGHOUT THE FIRST WEEK A SERIES OF MEDICAL TEAMS, INCLUDING FOUR BRITISH NURSES, WERE ASSIGNED TO BAKR. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CRISIS HAS NOW PAST, BOTH BRITISH EMBOFF AND NURSE SUSPECT THAT BAKR REMAINS PARTIALLY PARALYZED.

2. COMMENT: BAKR HAS NOT APPEARED IN PUBLIC FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. IN THE NEAR FUTURE WE WOULD EXPECT SOME PUBLIC HINT OF HIS ILLNESS, PERHAPS AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT BAKR WILL MAKE NO PUBLIC APPEARANCES DURING RAMADAN.

3. THE LATEST EPISODE IN BAKR'S HISTORY OF ILL-HEALTH, WHICH INCLUDES RECURRING HEART TROUBLE AND DIABETES, MAY SPEED UP THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO SADDAM HUSSEIN. ALTHOUGH THE CABINET WAS RESHUFFLED IN MAY, RUMORS OF IMPENDING CABINET CHANGES ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO SURFACE.

WILEY

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